

# Minutes of the meeting of the Yorkshire Synod of the United Reformed Church held on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at Heckmondwike United Reformed Church.

## 1. Welcome and opening comments

The Moderator offered a welcome to all who have attended, and especially to those attending a Synod meeting for the first time.

The Moderator also noted several departures and imminent departures from the Synod.

Rev Simon Copley retired as a minister in the Sheffield Team on 31st December 2024 and Rev Zaidie Orr will be retiring on 31st March 2025, also from the Sheffield Team. The meeting also marked the final appearance of Alastair Forsyth as the Trust Officer. He retires on 31st March and Synod was informed that Mrs Rachel Crawshaw (currently Finance and Administrative Officer for the Synod) has been appointed to take on the role of Company Secretary and Trust Officer from 1st April 2025.

The secretary of Heckmondwike URC, Mrs Janet Virr, welcomed Synod representatives on behalf of the church and gave a brief history of Heckmondwike which has a junior church of which 3 are attending this weekend's URC Youth Assembly. She also gave an overview of the several initiatives the church has in its work in the local community.

## 2. Synod Convened

Synod was convened by the Moderator, Rev Jamie Kissack.

## 3. Present

There were 35 Lay people, 14 Ministers, 1 CRCW, 2 Lay Leaders and 7 Retired Ministers representing 39 churches and Sheffield Teaching Hospitals Trust. It was noted that the Yorkshire Synod Youth representative and some other usual representatives were attending the URC Youth Assembly and Synod wished them well in their work and activities there.

## 4. Apologies

Apologies have been received from 3 Ministers, 10 Retired Ministers and 16 Lay People.

## 5. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2024 were presented, agreed as a true record and were signed by the Moderator.

Synod had not met since the October 2024 meeting.

## 6. Matters Arising

The Moderator raised one matter arising from the minutes: following on from Hilary Davies' presentation on Israel/Palestine, the Moderator had been in touch with Neil Irving of the EAPPI organisation (The Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel) so that future work between them and Yorkshire URC may be planned into future events.

## **7. Notices**

The Clerk gave the notices for the day including the appointment of Mrs Jane Bunyan and Mr Alastair Forsyth as tellers if the need arose for the counting of votes in any of the day's resolutions.

The Clerk also noted that the report from the Children and Young People's committee has been uploaded to the digital papers that had been circulated and that an emergency resolution has been received and which the Moderator has agreed we can take at this meeting. This was also uploaded to the digital papers and printed copies were made available in the room. The Clerk indicated that the resolution will be taken in the "Have Courage, Be Brave" section of this afternoon's business and will require a formal vote.

## **8. Date and Place of October 2024 meeting**

Synod will meet again on the Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> October at St Andrew's United Reformed Church, Roundhay.

The Clerk also asked that churches willing to host Synod should contact him in the usual manner.

## **9. Worship**

Worship was led by the Moderator, basing the address on 1 Thessalonians 2 1-8. The worship was interwoven in the key business of the morning under the theme "Have Courage, Be Brave.

## **10. "Have Courage, Be Brave": Local Church Challenges in a Changing Environment.**

Rev Jamie Kissack began this session asking the question of what does it mean to be brave or to be courageous in our church/URC context? He invited the meeting to reflect on what it is to be brave and courageous in the context of being a Christian in the URC in Yorkshire today. He used the example of Rt Rev Mariann Edgar Budde, the Bishop of Washington in her address at the National Cathedral in Washington DC as an example of what we could be measured against. He also acknowledged that another key local example of being brave etc is that of staying the course, where local matters and local issues are as much of a challenge to a local congregation as is the idea of speaking truth to power.

The Moderator invited Synod to gather into small groups to discuss local challenges which require a brave or courageous response. The following comments were expressed:

- Some churches need to find the courage to spend money on mission, especially that money sat dormant in reserves.
- Churches need to speak up for those on the margins.
- Richer churches need to be willing to help more active poorer churches.
- Can churches have the courage to talk on local, quite contentious, issues?
- It is brave to ask questions about what churches can do without financial resources.
- Being comfortable and being uncomfortable: church can easily be a comfort to those asking for it, but church can be uncomfortable when confronting social issues. The latter is where courage is needed.
- Church needs courage to talk about its faith. Good at doing good works, but not so when explaining why in both a corporate and an individual manner
- Churches find there is a challenge between accepting issues and affirming issues.
- Challenge to talk about God – how can churches do it. Proactivity means courage.
- Courage to change; culture, ways of doing things etc.

The Moderator then played a video extract of the address where Bishop Budde articulated the fears and humanity of two communities that have been vilified and attacked in recent years: the LGBTQ+ community and immigrants, particularly those who are undocumented.

The Moderator also reminded the meeting of that part of Statement on Nature Faith & Order of URC which emphasizes that the church is distinct and separate from the state in particular: *“We believe that Christ gives his Church a government distinct from the government of the state. In things that affect obedience to God the Church is not subordinate to the state, but must serve the Lord Jesus Christ, its only Ruler and Head.*

*Civil authorities are called to serve God’s will of justice and peace for all humankind, and to respect the rights of conscience and belief.*

***While we ourselves are servants in the world as citizens of God’s eternal kingdom.”***

And that part of the Ordination and Induction promise used by the United Reformed Church:

*“Do you promise to live a holy life, and to maintain the truth of the gospel, whatever trouble or persecution may arise?*

***Relying on the strength of Christ, I do.”***

The Moderator invited Synod to go back into their groups to consider 3 final questions:

When have you shown courage?

How does the church show courage?

What do we need to speak courageously about?

Responses from the groups included:

- Failure to speak courageously about our faith has been apparent. Need to state that Jesus is our Lord in a secular state.
- Church needs to speak courageously on growing national and international inequality.
- Courage to talk on environmental issues which is at the root of many other issues facing society.
- Talking on Faith, environment and injustices and to do so together.
- Challenge to cut through denominational red tape, especially when mission is the key.
- Need to speak courageously about the future. The URC is fine when talking about its past, but on the future not so well.
- Need that individually we are courageous to do those things to which Christ calls us.

## **11. Synod Forums.**

Rev Jason McCullagh gave feedback on the four Synod Forums held during 2024 at St Andrew’s Scarborough on 11th May, Gleadless on 1st June, Salem Burley on 8th June and Christchurch Hipperholme on 6th July.

They were on an open Invitation basis with the structure founded on engaging with scripture and led to feedback on a wide range of topics into Synod. 87 people in total attended.

Rev McCullagh reported on the feedback, listing many of the hopes and fears of those who attended. Much of the feedback has been brought to Pastoral Committee and Synod Council and is in the process of being addressed. One element that has is that a fresh Lay Presidency course is being put together and details will be circulated of the two sessions being planned. Finally, Rev McCullagh informed Synod of the dates of next year’s Forums which will have the theme of **“Vocation and Leadership”**: 24<sup>th</sup> May 2025 at St Ninian’s & St Andrew’s, Hull, 31<sup>st</sup> May 2025 at West Park, Harrogate, 7<sup>th</sup> June 2025 at Ravensthorpe and 12<sup>th</sup> July 2025 at West Melton. The format is yet to be framed, but they all start at 10.30am and will finish by 2pm.

## 12. Stepwise










Mrs Lesley Coote updated Synod on the Stepwise programme, in particular “Faith Filled Conversations”. She noted that it was very adaptable and flexible and designed for both individuals and groups alike. With this programme there is the ability to raise awareness of conversations that may be difficult for us as it is aimed at developing confidence when engaging in conversations which are challenging.

She concluded in offering available time for her to meet with church groups in setting up Stepwise groups, and that in the first instance contact can be made either directly with her at [festivefox1@outlook.com](mailto:festivefox1@outlook.com), [coote81@gmail.com](mailto:coote81@gmail.com) or through the Synod office e-mail at [office@urcyorkshire.org.uk](mailto:office@urcyorkshire.org.uk)

**Stepwise**

**Stepwise Faith-filled Conversation- session outline**

*Faith-filled Conversations help you to reflect on your Christian journey so far and how you can share your faith, confidently, with others.*

Session number (and group-session timing guidance)	Session title	Topics explored in this session include
	<b>Come Inside – begin your journey here</b>	Introduction to Stepwise and Faith-filled Conversation
 Session 1 (2 hours)	<b>The Journey so Far</b>	Build on Bible study, prayer and reflection skills. Reflect on your Christian faith journey so far.
 Session 2 (2 hours)	<b>My Story within Gods big story</b>	A deeper understanding of how God and faith is experienced by us and how history shapes our faith today. Recognise and appreciate the diversity of the Community of Faith.
	<b>See mentor</b>	Your mentor will have received notes from you or your facilitator on sessions 1 and 2
 Session 3 (2 hours)	<b>My Faith in today's culture</b>	Consider how faith is portrayed in today's context. Explore faith conversations in our everyday context and use scripture to help engage in conversations.
 Session 4 (2 hours)	<b>Faith-Filled Conversations that Challenge Us.</b>	This session will help raise your awareness of conversations that might be difficult. Assist you to develop your confidence when engaging in difficult conversations.
 Session 5 (2 hours)	<b>Changing Conversations</b>	Reflect on how your conversations impact both you and others. Consider how your background and beliefs shape your reactions, as well as how others' backgrounds and culture affect theirs. Reflect on 'gut reactions or unconscious biases.
	<b>See mentor</b>	Your mentor will have received notes from you or your facilitator on sessions 3, 4 and 5
 Session 6 (2 hours)	<b>Conversations for the Road.</b>	Consider that conversations of faith can be part of our everyday journeys. Reflect that God is interested in all of life and is with us in everything we do.  You will have grown more confident in sharing your faith story with others.

For further information visit [www.urc.org.uk/stepwise](http://www.urc.org.uk/stepwise) or send an email to: [stepwise@urc.org.uk](mailto:stepwise@urc.org.uk)

## 13. Leading Your Church into Growth (LYCiG)

The Synod Evangelist, Rev Ashley Evans, addressed Synod on the spring and summer's LYCiG programme. Dates have been arranged as follows: 5<sup>th</sup> April at Holme URC, Bradford; 10<sup>th</sup> May at Longcauseway Church, Dewsbury; 28<sup>th</sup> June at The Bridge Church, Otley; 5<sup>th</sup> July at Gleadless URC, Sheffield. They all start at 9.30am and aim to finish by 3.30pm.

He also mentioned that he had dates available in the summer for visits to churches and that a good place to start with all things LYCiG (apart from the LYCiG website) is through conversation starters using this link <https://www.youneedtotalkaboutgod.com/>

Finally, he mentioned that the national LYCiG Conference is due to take place between 24<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> November 2025 at The Hayes, Swanwick.

## 14. Safeguarding and Safer Recruitment

The Synod's Safeguarding Lead, Mr Matt Knowles was invited to address Synod. He outlined the latest developments in the Safeguarding and Safer Recruitment aspect of Synod Life, in particular Annual Returns and took several questions from the floor. One question on why non URC church DBS's cannot be used, for example those issued by Methodist church was answered regretfully that at present there is no mechanism to make the two denominations systems compatible, so at present for those who have a DBS from a partner denomination for

work in an LEP where that partner's Safeguarding policy is being used, there is no mechanism to transfer its validity to a church using the URC Safeguarding policies. However he noted that the policies are being constantly reviewed and any changes will be conveyed quickly to churches. In the meantime he stressed that for those churches following URC guidelines only URC DBS checks are valid.

Mr Knowles thanked Synod for their efforts as all the safeguarding returns had been received on time. He mentioned that Safeguarding team is now a permanent fixture and he reminded Synod that the safeguarding inbox is checked every day.

One thing to note is the sharing of safeguarding policies. Church safeguarding policy should not be shared with other organisations. If there could be an issue the advice is to contact the safeguarding team. Bookings from corporate bodies should have their own safeguarding policies in place and should not be using the host church's policy.

The Moderator reported on The Moderators and Safeguarding leads meeting on 6th March. He stated that a great team is in place and we have moved forward so well as a denomination, helped to a great degree by Mr Knowles, the Synod team and he also thanked the Synod churches for their support.

Finally, Mr Knowles moved Resolution No 4

***Yorkshire Synod, meeting at Heckmondwike URC on 8th March 2025, resolves to receive and adopt the Yorkshire Synod Safeguarding Policy: Children and Adults (December 2024) as its formal Safeguarding Policy until March 2026, the only change on the 2024 one being the date.***

Passed Unanimously

## 15. Pre-Lunch Announcements

- Rev Alison Micklem drew Synod's attention to "Place For Hope" as a means of reconciliation. Strap line is *Enabling Healthy Discussions, How good things can grow*. Place for Hope will now be supporting the URC for at least the next 3 years. They will be conducting a needs assessment and will be asking churches & Synods to respond. Training is also being run by them and they are looking for two teams of two to undertake their training, mainly online, in the Spring; approaches will be made. Also if anyone is interested speak to Revs Alison Micklem or Jamie Kissack.
- The Moderator mentioned that many of our younger end are at Youth Assembly, including Megan Tillbrook who is the Synod's Children and Young People Development Practitioner. The news filtering through is that it is a vibrant and successful event and that more details will be circulated in due course.
- The Moderator then drew attention to Big Day Out, taking place on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> May and the fact that leaflets had been distributed for representatives to take back to their churches. If churches book Coaches, then the cost of this can be subsidised by the Synod Mission Fund through application to the Clerk.
- Eco Policy/Green Apostles. Rod Morrison of the Eco Group informed Synod that an e-mail is to be sent out by the Eco group. Synod policy has a series of appendices of which he emphasised one, that of carbon footprint measurement and the campaign groups which the Eco Group are recommending that church groups support.
- Mrs Val Morrison addressed Synod on Mathetes/Elders Development "Disciples Conference". It is being held on 22<sup>nd</sup> March at Stainbeck URC and is being led by Rev Dr Michael Hopkins, the Moderator of the Wessex Synod.

Grace was offered by the Moderator and Lunch was taken.

**16. Have Courage, Be Brave: How Yorkshire Synod Can Engage.**

The Moderator introduced this next section which, although was not directly linked to the morning session, fitted the tenor of the day's deliberations. To effectively debate the emergency resolution that he had allowed Mr Dan Morrell to bring he explained consensus working and how the discussions will work and the steps that are to be taken to lead to Synod making a decision.

The Moderator then invited Mr Dan Morrell to present and speak on the following emergency resolution.

**EMERGENCY RESOLUTION TO BE PRESENTED AT THE MEETING OF THE YORKSHIRE SYNOD OF THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH, 8th March 2025**

*Proposed by: Dan Morrell*

*Seconded by: Rev Tim Lowe*

- a) The Yorkshire Synod of the United Reformed Church expresses deep disappointment in the manner with which the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine was treated towards the latter end of his visit to, and press conference in, the United States on Friday 28th February 2025.*
- b) Yorkshire Synod cannot, however, condone the bullying, lack of opportunity afforded to President Zelenskyy to speak and reply, and the disregard for the current tragic situation in which Ukraine and its people find themselves.*
- c) Yorkshire Synod accepts and encourages differences in political opinion, but does not accept these differences to negate the need to treat others with dignity and respect.*
- d) Yorkshire Synod continues to support the statement made by the Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE) on 18th March 2022, condemning the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia, emphasising the need to pray, speak out and help.*
- e) Yorkshire Synod recommits itself to prayer for lasting peace and justice in Ukraine. It encourages local churches and individuals to support programmes and charities that work with those who continue to be affected by this unlawful invasion. In particular, the Commitment for Life appeal in support of refugees and Internally Displaced Persons located to the west of Ukraine in Transcarpathia.*
- f) Yorkshire Synod commends, too, the Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) resources and briefing for all to engage with.*
- g) Yorkshire Synod affirms the words of The Right Reverend Mariann Edgar Budde delivered at the Interfaith Prayer Service in January 2025 in Washington National Cathedral, wholly appropriate to reflect upon given these circumstances: "Our God teaches us that we are to be merciful to the stranger for we were all once strangers in this land. May God grant us the strength and courage to honour the dignity of every human being, to speak the truth to one another in love and walk humbly with each other and our God for the good of all people. The good of all people in this nation and the world."*

In introducing the resolution Mr Morrell stated that he brought this as a member of a local church, and not as Convenor of the Children and Young People Committee. He outlined the background to the resolution and the reasons it had been framed in this manner. He was conscious that the resolution is wide reaching, but he felt that he needed to address the

ongoing situation in Ukraine and the emerging one in the United States of America through this resolution.

From the floor several questions were raised including what does Yorkshire Synod do with it, if passed, when did Yorkshire Synod start supporting the statement made by the Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE) and is this a resolution about personalities rather than situation? In response Mr Morrell felt that if passed it should be seen as a statement of Yorkshire Synod, that the support for CPCE had been agreed by General Assembly on behalf of the denomination, and therefore by extension by Yorkshire Synod, and although no names are mentioned, it is apparent that the actions of the President and Vice-president of the United States of America were precipitous in the formation of the resolution.

In discussion several points of view were apparent. It was felt that sub-section b) was superfluous as well as a feeling that without the whole transcript of both Bishop Budde's address as well as the press conference on 28<sup>th</sup> February should be made available to Synod members prior to a decision.

Following on from this an amendment was proposed by Mr John Rider and seconded by Rev Rosalind Selby that clauses a) and b) are to be removed and the rest of the clauses to be re-lettered.

In discussion the original proposer resisted this amendment and from the floor it was apparent that the discussion was moving to splitting the original resolution further.

***It was during this debate that a call was made that this Resolution be not put, proposed by Rev Alison Micklem and seconded by Rev Simon Cross. This was carried by a substantial majority.***

The Moderator mentioned that this topic will be discussed further in Synod Council and elsewhere and invited a working party to take something forward for the next meeting. Those offering were Rev Alison Micklem, Rev Fran Kissack, Rev Jason McCullagh, Rev Simon Cross, Rev Nicola Robinson, Mrs Judy Rogers and Mr Dan Morrell.

Rev Tim Lowe addressed the meeting and reminded Synod that URC Youth Assembly is meeting at the same time as the Yorkshire Synod weekend and this is the kind of debate URC Youth is engaging in. Furthermore, he is encouraged that this kind of debate is taking place in this council and urges representatives to engage in similar conversation on their own churches.

The Moderator concluded this section in prayer.

## **17. Church Life Review**

Updates were offered on the various conversations occurring under the Church Life Review banner. <https://urc.org.uk/church-life-review-group/>

The Clerk led on resource sharing and the living labs and resource sharing across synods, especially in matters of compliance.

The Treasurer led on the financial implications whereby a 5 year plan is being put together in which each Synod contributes as is able and can draw down when appropriate. Not all Synods will contribute: at present four would contribute a large amount, five a medium amount, two a small amount and two would not contribute. The expenditure from the fund could range from £1m per annum up to £4m per annum, depending on immediate requirements. Yorkshire's contribution in the current models being explored is in the range of between £42,000 to £167,000. The fund would be administered by the URC Trust and each Synod would be both represented on that body and be proactive in processing any application to the fund. There will

be a further consultation in May 2025 and the final decision will be taken at the extra-ordinary General Assembly in November 2025.

Helen Snashall led on the Conversations at the Crossroads which was a three-day conference, of which there is a full summary on URC website

[https://urc.org.uk/?s=crossroads&asp\\_active=1&p\\_asid=1&p\\_asp\\_data=1&filters\\_initial=1&filters\\_changed=0&qtranslate\\_lang=0&current\\_page\\_id=3750](https://urc.org.uk/?s=crossroads&asp_active=1&p_asid=1&p_asp_data=1&filters_initial=1&filters_changed=0&qtranslate_lang=0&current_page_id=3750)

She reported that it felt like a meeting of acronyms, but all who attended were mission animators and were representatives of the more outward facing side of denomination. The conference looked at growing new faith communities and how to support existing communities.

The Moderator summed up the overall work being done within the Church Life Review, that updates can be found regularly at <https://urc.org.uk/church-life-review-group/> and that Yorkshire are active in all the conversations that are taking place.

## 18. Synod Business

The Clerk introduced this section and asked that the following Resolution be brought to Synod as it covers much of the Synod life section of the day's proceedings:

The Clerk then moved

Resolution No 1

***Synod receives the report of its Council*** which passed unanimously. The Clerk then informed Synod that after a thorough selection process Synod Council is happy to announce that Mrs Rachel Crawshaw has agreed to fill the newly named Company Secretary and Trust Officer role. The Clerk then indicated that an advert will be going out to look for a new Finance Assistant as well as for a part-time Communications Officer to work with the team at the Synod Office in Morley.

He then moved Resolution No 2

***Synod receives the reports from its Committees and Groups as presented in the attached papers where appropriate.***

- i. Moderator's Report.***
- ii. Synod Council Report***
- iii. Ministries Committee.***
- iv. Treasurer/Financial Resources Committee.***
- v. Safeguarding Committee.***
- vi. Children and Youth Work Committee***

The Moderator noted an anomaly in the CYP report in that Herringthorpe URC have adopted a new name change: 'Stag Community Church', but are NOT ceasing to be Herringthorpe URC. The resolution then passed unanimously.

## 19. Elders in Local Leadership Policy

The Convenor of Ministries Committee then proposed the following

**Resolution No 3**

**Yorkshire Synod, meeting at Heckmondwike United Reformed Church on 8th October 2024, resolves to adopt the United Reformed Church Yorkshire Synod "Elders in Local Leadership" policy.**

The policy (appended to the minutes) is the cumulation of work done within the Ministries Committee to develop a coherent policy to help those whose calling is to be Elders in local churches.

The resolution passed unanimously



## **20. Synod Life**

The Synod Treasurer, Rev Simon Copley briefly spoke on his report, which expands on the budget for 2025 which was agreed at the October 2024 Synod and which develops a potential strategy for the next few years. He also reported that Synods had been asked to contribute to the Legacy of Slavery fund which is designed to fund reparatory work in Jamaica, that the Pensions challenge was not as challenging now as was first thought and that he hoped that those churches which are holding large reserves of unrestricted assets may look to use those assets for missional work.

Rev David Coote addressed Synod on Delegation matters – whereby churches report the letting out of rooms to external bodies - and the need for churches to be more diligent in their reporting. He reminded churches of their legal obligations and that if they are unsure of the procedures in ensuring the delegation returns are sent into the Synod office twice yearly, then help can be sought from the Synod team.

Rev Jamie Kissack addressed Synod on the work of the Green Apostles group and the fact that behind the scenes they are building up a dedicated group ready to advise churches on all things environmental. More details can be gathered from the Synod office.

The Clerk continued and moved that the following Resolutions:

### **Resolution No 5**

**Yorkshire Synod thanks Mr Alastair Forsyth for the 5 years of service as Trust Secretary and wishes him well in his retirement from 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.**

Which passed unanimously

### **Resolution No 6**

**Rev Fran Kissack has stood down as one of Yorkshire Synod's Assembly Executive representatives and as member of Synod Council. Synod wishes to place on record its thanks to Rev Fran Kissack for this work and wishes her well for the future.**

Which passed unanimously

### **Resolution No 7**

**Mr John Eveleigh has agreed serve as one of Yorkshire Synod's Assembly Executive representatives and as a member of Synod Council. Therefore, Synod appoints Mr John Eveleigh to serve as one of Yorkshire Synod's Assembly Executive representatives and as a member of Synod Council for a period of three years until March 2028.**

Which passed unanimously

### **Resolution No 8**

**Synod appoints the following to be part of its representation of 16 people to the URC General Assembly meeting to be held between 4<sup>th</sup> July 2025 and 7<sup>th</sup> July 2024 and to the Extra-ordinary General Assembly to be held between 14<sup>th</sup> November and 16<sup>th</sup> November 2025:**

**Rev Jamie Kissack, Rev Alison Micklem, Rev David Coote, Rev Chris Wood, Rev Simon Copley, Rev Simon Cross, Ms Helen Snashall, Rev Fran Kissack, Rev Joe Amoah, Mr Tim Crossley, Mr Daniel Raddings, Mr John Eveleigh, Mrs Janet Virr, Miss Lydia Raddings, Miss Megan Westgarth, Mr Rod Morrison.**

Which passed unanimously

#### **Resolution No 9**

**Rev Zaidie Orr is retiring as Yorkshire Synod's Racial Justice Advocate after many years of dedicated service. Synod wishes to place on record its thanks to Rev Zaidie Orr for her work in this field and wishes her well for the future.**

Which passed unanimously

#### **Resolution No 10**

**Mr Trevor Orr is standing down as a member of the Yorkshire District Council. Synod wishes to place on record its thanks to Mr Trevor Orr for this work and wishes him well for the future.**

Which passed unanimously

#### **Resolution No 11**

**Mr Trevor Orr is standing down as the Synod Pastoral Elder for Sheffield and as a member of the Pastoral Committee after many years of service. Synod wishes to place on record its thanks to Mr Trevor Orr for this work and wishes him well for the future.**

Which passed unanimously

#### **Resolution No 12**

**Mrs Sally-Ann Rogerson has agreed serve as the Synod Pastoral Elder for Sheffield and as a member of the Pastoral Committee. Therefore, Synod appoints Sally-Ann Rogerson to serve as the Synod Pastoral Elder for Sheffield and as a member of the Pastoral Committee for a period of three years until March 2028.**

Which passed unanimously

#### **Resolution No 13**

**Ms Kacie Hodgson has agreed serve as a member of the Children and Young People's Committee. Therefore, Synod appoints Ms Kacie Hodgson to serve as a member of the Children and Youth Work Committee for a period of three years until March 2028.**

Which passed unanimously

#### **Resolution No 14**

**Ms Lydia Raddings has agreed serve as a member of the Children and Young People's Committee. Therefore, Synod appoints Ms Lydia Raddings to serve as a member of the Children and Youth Work Committee for a period of three years until March 2028.**

Which passed unanimously

## **21. Thanks**

The Clerk offered thanks to

- Rev Jamie Kissack for leading us today.
- Those who have participated: Matt, Lesley, Kath, Val, Jason, Ashley, Helen and Simon, and the representatives in the room through their work in the plenary sessions.
- Office Staff, Sally, Anne, Rachel and Hayley for coping with way Synod has been put together this Spring – and a request for the October 2025 Synod in that if there are any papers that they be sent in by mid-September (or earlier)!!
- All who have attended the Synod at Heckmondwike. The Clerk asked representatives to take back to their churches not just their impressions of the day but also the information they had received to share with their congregations. The Clerk asked that

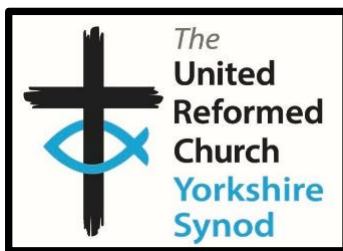
representatives be not shy about sending feedback; he needs to know what we did well, what needs improving and how we do this kind of meeting in the future.

- To the good folk at Heckmondwike URC for allowing us to use their buildings and the excellent hospitality throughout the day.

## 22. Closing Worship including in Memoriam

Closing worship was led by members of the SPACE group of churches (Heckmondwike, Longcauseway and Norristhorpe) and included the Synod's In Memoriam (appended to the minutes).

**23. Synod Concluded** to meet again on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2025 at St Andrew's Roundhay URC.



# Yorkshire Synod In Memoriam October 2024 to March 2025

### Elders

Barbara Poxton  
Frank Dale  
Trevor Roberts  
Margaret Paylor

Elder  
Elder  
Elder & Treasurer  
Elder

Doncaster  
The Bridge Church, Otley  
West Park, Harrogate  
Longcauseway, Dewsbury

Signed.....Date.....

## **Elders in Local Leadership Policy – Yorkshire Synod**

### **1. Discerning the call and appointment of an Elder in Local Leadership to a local church**

- 1.1 *The concept of 'call' is fundamental to our understanding of discipleship. The Bible says much about the variety of tasks to which people may be called, perhaps most notably in Paul's use of the image of the body (eg.1 Corinthians 12). The 'call' is primarily the call of God but may be heard and interpreted in various ways.*
- 1.2 *Each Elder in Local Leadership position is unique and the role is not transferrable outside the local church or the team ministry to which they have been appointed.*
- 1.3 *All Elders in Local Leadership must be Elders in the United Reformed Church, and the Marks of Ministry for Elders in Local Leadership, the Guidelines on Conduct and Behaviour for Elders (General Assembly Reports 2010, Appendix 3c) and the Disciplinary Policy for Office Holders apply to all Elders in Local Leadership.*
- 1.4 *As with any ministry within the URC, call is a discernment process. Call is always a gradual process of coming to know who God is calling you to be. Therefore, the candidate must first speak with their Synod Moderator about their sense of call and the vocation to which they feel called.*
- 1.5 *If the Synod Moderator discerns a sense of call it is at this point that exploration will be given to the role they will fulfil in the life of their local church. The Synod Moderator and Pastoral Convener shall determine whether the local church is in agreement to the appointment of an Elder in Local Leadership. If so, the Synod Moderator shall forward their details to the Ministries Committee Convener.*
- 1.6 *The Ministries Committee Convener shall supply an application form to the candidate setting out details of the candidate's:*
  - *Journey of faith;*
  - *Character/Spiritual Maturity;*
  - *Prior local church experience, including positions of responsibility held, with brief summary of dates and nature of duties, and experience of the wider councils of the church (e.g. attendance at Synod meetings, General Assembly, membership of national or Synod committees);*
  - *Previous theological studies (if any) (e.g. theology degree, TLS Foundation Course, accredited lay preacher training in the United Reformed Church or another denomination);*
  - *Participation in "Stepwise" or similar courses exploring discipleship;*
  - *Previous practical training (e.g. elders' training courses – give detail of subject-matter covered);*
  - *Experience of reflective practice;*
  - *Life experience/training gained in workplace;*
  - *Other information the candidate considers relevant to assessment of their training needs.*
- 1.7 *Upon receipt of the completed application form, the Ministries Committee Convener:*
  - a) *takes up references (one from minister/interim moderator and one other);*
  - b) *organises an assessed service where the call is to a preaching ministry (normally 2 people) and a written report of the service;*

- c) organises a Synod interview and a written report. The candidate is able to bring a 'supporter' who will not be part of the formal interview but may be invited to speak at the end of the interview.

## **2. Safer Appointment of Elders in Local Leadership**

The United Reformed Church is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all within our church communities. The United Reformed Church recognises the importance of carefully selecting, training and supporting all those with any responsibility within the Church. Synods will use the process for the Safer Election of Elders. <https://urc.org.uk/urc-ministries/safer-election-of-elders/>

## **3. Training**

3.1 If the candidate is successful, the training needs will be agreed by Ministries Committee.

This could be one of:

- a) Assembly Accredited Lay Preachers
- b) Assembly Accredited Lay Pioneers
- c) URC Church Leadership Programme
- d) An equivalent Synod Course as agreed by Ministries Committee.

Funding for training will be through the 'normal' route for funding

- i) From the individual and/or
- ii) The local church
- iii) The Synod and/or
- iv) Education & Learning

### **3.2 Applicants**

- a) attend the in person You're Welcome: An Ethos and History of the URC course held at Westminster College, Cambridge;
- b) will undergo safeguarding training and other mandatory training appropriate to their role as well as any further training which the denomination shall determine from time to time;
- c) will receive an annual grant of £300, which will be available [equivalent to Lay Preachers] for further training;

3.3 Upon completion of training the Synod Moderator or their representative shall:

- a) meet with the elders of the local church to finalise the role description and Terms of Settlement;
- b) organise a Service of Commissioning for the Elder in Local Leadership.

## **4. Oversight.**

All Elders in Local Leadership must be subject to the supervision of a minister of Word and Sacraments who will be appointed as a Principal Contact. When making the appointment of any Elder in Local Leadership it is the responsibility of the Synod to ensure that adequate provision is made to ensure that such oversight is carried out.

## **5. Appointments:**

The initial appointment shall be for 3 years with a review at year 2.5 with the possibility of renewal.